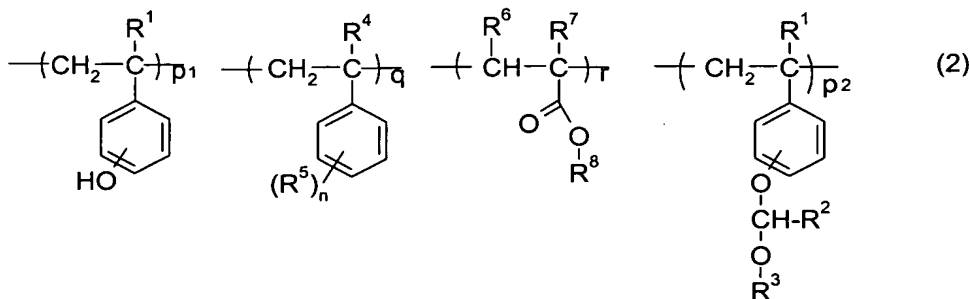
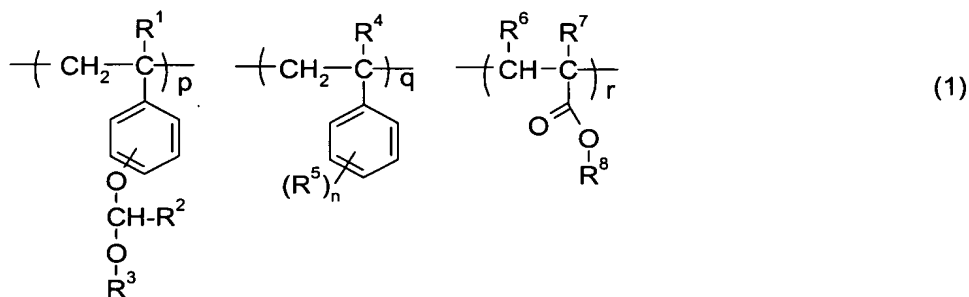


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for preparing a polymer comprising recurring units of the following general formula (2) and having a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of about 1,000 to 500,000 and a molecular weight dispersity (Mw/Mn) of 1.0 to 1.3, said method comprising the step of effecting deblocking reaction on a polymer comprising recurring units of the following general formula (1) and having a weight average molecular weight (Mw) of about 1,000 to 500,000 and a molecular weight dispersity (Mw/Mn) of 1.0 to 1.3 in the presence of an acid catalyst,



wherein R¹ and R⁴ each are hydrogen or methyl,

R² and R³ each are a straight or branched alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, or R² and R³, taken together, may form a ring,

R^5 is hydrogen, a hydroxyl group, straight or branched alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, substitutable alkoxy group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, halogen atom or acid labile group,

R^6 and R^7 each are hydrogen, a methyl group, alkoxycarbonyl group having 2 to 10 carbon atoms, cyano group or halogen atom,

R^8 is a tertiary alkyl group of 4 to 20 carbon atoms,

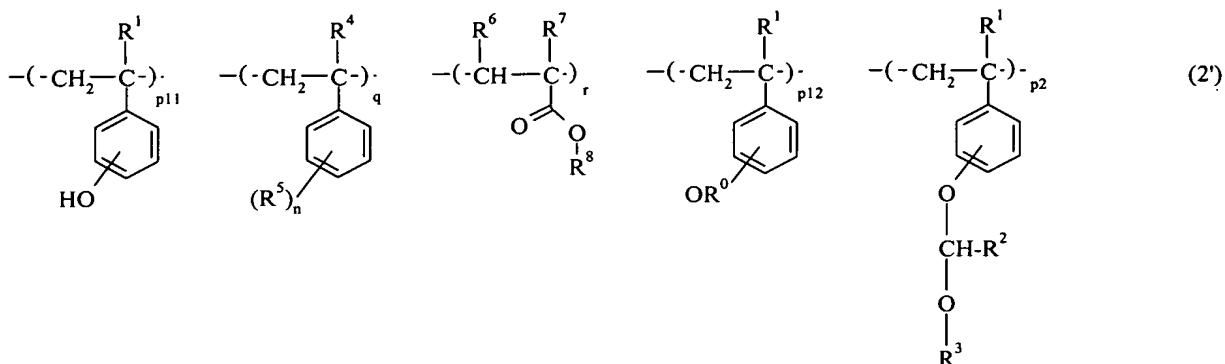
n is 0 or a positive integer of 1 to 4,

p is a positive number, q and r each are 0 or a positive number, q and r are not equal to 0 at the same time,

p_1 is a positive number, p_2 is 0 or a positive number, and $p_1 + p_2 = p$.

2. **(Original)** The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (1) has been produced by an anionic polymerization process.

3. **(Original)** A method for preparing a polymer comprising recurring units of the following general formula (2'), said method comprising the step of introducing acid labile groups into phenolic hydroxyl groups on the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2) prepared by the method of claim 1,



wherein R^0 is an acid labile group, $p11$ is 0 or a positive number, $p12$ is a positive number, $p11+p12 = p1$, R^1 to R^8 , n , $p1$, $p2$, q and r are as defined above.

4. **(Original)** A resist composition comprising the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2) obtained by the method of claim 1.

5. **(Currently Amended)** A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) an organic solvent,
- (B) the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2) ~~or (2')~~ obtained by the method of claim 1 as a base resin, and
- (C) a photoacid generator.

6. **(Currently Amended)** A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

- (A) an organic solvent,

(B) the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2) ~~or (2')~~ obtained by the method of claim 1 as a base resin,

(C) a photoacid generator, and

(D) a dissolution inhibitor.

7. **(Original)** The resist composition of claim 5 further comprising (E) a basic compound.

8. **(New)** A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

(A) an organic solvent,

(B) the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2') obtained by the method of claim 3 as a base resin, and

(C) a photoacid generator.

9. **(New)** A chemically amplified positive resist composition comprising

(A) an organic solvent,

(B) the polymer comprising recurring units of formula (2') obtained by the method of claim 3 as a base resin,

(C) a photoacid generator, and

(D) a dissolution inhibitor.

10. **(New)** The method of claim 1, further comprising synthesizing the polymer (2) by heat polymerizing an alkoxyalkoxystyrene monomer, a (meth)acrylic tertiary ester monomer

and optionally, a styrene or styrene derivative monomer in an organic solvent in the presence of a radical initiator, and subjecting the resulting polymer (1) to acid hydrolysis in an organic solvent for deblocking the acetal protective groups, thereby producing a polymer (2).

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the organic solvent is toluene, benzene, tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether or dioxane.

12. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the radical initiator is 2,2'-azobisisobutyronitrile, 2,2'-azobis(2,4-dimethylvaleronitrile), dimethyl-2,2'-azobis(2-methylpropionate), benzoyl peroxide or lauroyl peroxide.

13. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the polymerization temperature is about 50°C – 80°C and the reaction time is about 2 – 100 hours.

14. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the acid hydrolysis is conducted with a catalyst comprising an oxalic acid, an acetic acid, or a pyridinium p-toluenesulfonate.

15. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the acid hydrolysis reaction the reaction temperature is about -20°C – 100°C and the reaction time is usually about 0.2 – 100 hours.

16. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising synthesizing the polymer (2) by living anion polymerization by reacting an alkoxyalkoxystyrene monomer, a (meth)acrylic

tertiary ester monomer and optionally, a styrene or styrene derivative monomer, in an organic solvent.

17. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the organic solvent is hexane, cyclohexane, toluene, benzene, diethyl ether or tetrahydrofuran.

18. (New) The method of claim 16; further comprising adding an anionic species to the solvent, which is an organometallic compound or an alkylated lanthanoid compound.

19. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the polymerization temperature is -100°C – 30°C.

20. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein polymer (1) has a weight average molecular weight of 2,000 – 30,000.

21. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein r is a positive number.